

Chikungunya Virus

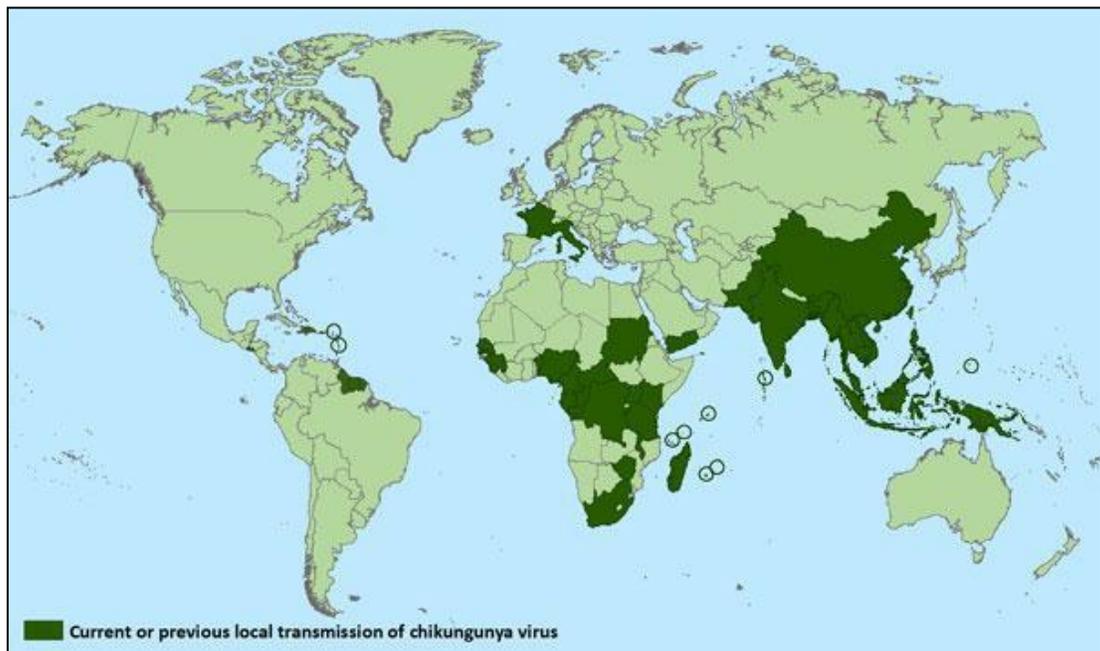
Information for the Public

July 2014

What is chikungunya virus?

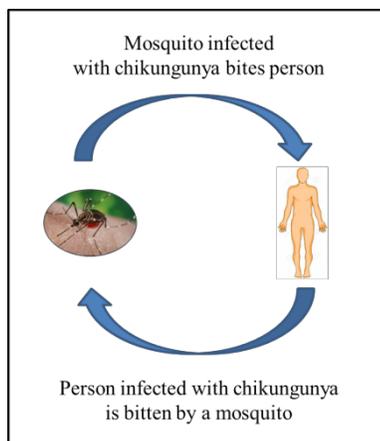
Chikungunya is a virus spread to people from the bite of an infected mosquito. The two mosquito species that commonly transmit the virus are *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus*. *Aedes albopictus* has been found in many counties in West Virginia.

Chikungunya virus was discovered during an outbreak in Tanzania in 1952. Over 70 countries have reported local transmission of the virus, including many islands in the Caribbean and countries in South America. Other countries have also reported imported cases (people who got the virus in another country and returned to their home country).



Countries and territories where chikungunya cases have been reported as of July 2014 (does not include imported cases).

How is chikungunya spread to people?



Chikungunya virus is transmitted to people through bites from infected mosquitoes. Mosquitoes become infected when they bite a person already infected with the virus, and the cycle continues. Infected mosquitoes can then spread the virus to other people through bites.

Chikungunya is usually not transmitted from one person to another; though, spread of the virus from mother to child is has been reported. There have been no cases of the virus being spread by a blood transfusion.

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What is the incubation period for chikungunya virus?

Symptoms usually begin 3-7 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito.

What are symptoms associated with chikungunya virus?

Chikungunya is characterized by sudden onset of fever and joint pain. Other common symptoms include muscle pain, headache, nausea, fatigue and rash. Eye, neurological, and heart complications have been reported, as well as gastrointestinal complaints. People with chikungunya virus usually get better in 7-10 days, but chikungunya virus can be severe and disabling for several months in some cases.

What should I do if I think I have chikungunya virus?

The symptoms of chikungunya virus are similar to those of Dengue fever, another viral disease spread by the same species of mosquitoes and is also found in many of the same countries where chikungunya virus is found. If you have traveled recently, let your healthcare provider know so that blood tests to look for chikungunya virus, Dengue fever or other similar diseases can be ordered.

What should I do if I have chikungunya virus?

During your first week of infection, chikungunya virus can be found in your blood. If you get bitten by a mosquito at that time, the mosquito can bite another person and make them sick. Stay indoors until one week after your fever started. If you must go out, wear long sleeves and pants and mosquito repellent to help protect others from illness.

What is the treatment for chikungunya virus?

There is currently no treatment for infection with chikungunya virus. The best ways to recover is:

- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink fluids to prevent dehydration.
- If your doctor recommends it, take medication to relieve fever and pain (e.g. ibuprofen, acetaminophen). These medicines are not recommended for Dengue fever, so check with your doctor first.

What are some ways to prevent chikungunya virus?

Since there is no vaccine to prevent chikungunya virus, the best way to prevent illness is to prevent mosquito bites:

- Use air conditioning or window/door screen to keep mosquitoes outside.
- Get rid of containers that hold water – buckets, pails, flower pots, and bird baths. Mosquitoes can breed in standing water.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants when going into areas where mosquitoes are active.
- Use insect repellents containing DEET, picardin, IR3535, or oil of eucalyptus.

Information was gathered from the following sources:

CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/index.html>

WHO: <http://www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/index.html>

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